1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

DO NOT LOSE HOPE

THE EPISTLE TO THESSALONIANS

- Thessalonica was the capital and largest city of the Roman province of Macedonia.
- Located on the Egnatian Way, a major road from Rome to the eastern provinces, the city served as center of trade and commerce.
- Today, it is known as Thessaloniki, or Salonica.

1 Thessalonians

- **CHAPTERS**: 4 | **VERSES**: 89

2 Thessalonians

- **CHAPTERS**: 3 | **VERSES**: 47

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA

- The establishment of the church is recorded in **Ac 17:1-9**.
- On his second missionary journey while Paul was in Troas, God showed him a vision of a man from Macedonia saying, “Come over and help us.”
- Paul and Silas went, stopping first at Philippi, where they preached, and a church was formed.
- After spending a night in prison for driving an evil spirit from a girl, Paul and Silas were forced to leave Philippi. They went down the road to Thessalonica.
- For at least three Sabbath days Paul reasoned in the synagogue with those present, and many believed the gospel.
- However, he probably ministered in Thessalonica for a longer time than just three weeks in view of what he wrote that he had done there.
- Those who responded to the message of Christ’s sufferings and resurrection were Jews and God-fearing Greeks.
- There were also some leading women of the city and many idol-worshipping pagans.

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA

- This angered a group of unbelieving Jews who then stirred up a gang to attack the house of Jason where Paul and his friends had been staying.
- Unable to find the missionaries, the mob dragged Jason before the magistrates who simply commanded him to keep the peace.
- Convinced of the danger for Paul and Jason, the Christians sent Paul and Silas away from the city by night to nearby Berea.
- Paul and his party began their evangelistic work in Berea in the synagogue, as was their custom.
- However when many Jews there believed, the Thessalonian Jews came down to Berea and stirred up more trouble.
- The Berean Christians sent Paul away to Athens, but Silas and Timothy remained in Berea.
- Despite such ominous beginnings, a strong church was established in Thessalonica (cf. **1Th 1:2-10**).
- Mostly Gentile (cf. **1Th 1:9**), its members included Jason (**Ac 17:9**), Aristarchus, and Secundus (**Ac 20:4**).

THE BACKGROUND OF THE EPISTLES

- The abrupt departure from Thessalonica so soon after the beginning of the church naturally left Paul anxious about the condition of the brethren.
- When Timothy joined Paul at Athens (cf. **Ac 17:14-16**), his concern prompted Paul to send Timothy at once back to Thessalonica to encourage and ground the new disciples in the faith, and to learn how they were enduring persecution (cf. **1Th 3:1-5**).
- When Timothy returned to Paul in Corinth (cf. **Ac 18:5**), the news was mostly encouraging (cf. **1Th 3:6-7**).
- Despite persecution they had remained strong (**1Th 2:13-16**), and even proved themselves to be an example to others (**1Th 1:6-8**).
- Yet, as with any young church, they needed further instruction concerning holy living (cf. **1Th 4:1-12**).
- They also needed to be reassured that their loved ones who died in Christ would not miss out on the blessings involving the coming of our Lord (cf. **1Th 4:13-18**).

TEACHINGS ON RAPTURE

- 1 Thessalonians provides Christians with the clearest biblical passage on the coming rapture of believers, an event that will inaugurate the 7-year tribulation.
- At the rapture, Christ will return for His people.
- The dead in Christ shall rise first, while those still living will follow close behind.
- All believers will meet Jesus in the air to begin an eternity spent with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18).
- Unbelievers will experience God's wrath, while believers will inherit salvation (1:10; 5:2–4, 9–10).
- In preparation for that great day, Christians are called to be holy and blameless (3:11–4:8; 5:23).
- God, who is faithful, will produce in them the holiness he requires (5:24).

2 THESSALONIANS

- Shortly after writing 1 Thessalonians, the apostle Paul received a report (2 Thess. 3:11) that the Thessalonian church had accepted the strange claim that “the day of the Lord has come” (2:1–2).
- Paul sent them a second letter in A.D. 49–51 during Paul's extended stay at Corinth on his second missionary journey (cf. **Ac 18:1-11**)
- False teachers had been presenting fake letters as if from Paul and telling the Thessalonian believers that the day of the Lord had already come.
- Several of Paul’s references indicate that some in Thessalonica were deliberately misleading these new believers, even to the point of false teachers forging letters to make them look as if they had come from Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:2).
- The apostle, therefore, took extra care in this letter to make sure the Thessalonians understood not only his views on the end times but also what his handwriting looked like, so they would be able to identify letters as authentically his (3:17).

- Paul needed to address the three troubles the church in Thessalonica faced:
- **Persecution from outside.**
- When Jesus returns? God will give them relief and judge their persecutors (2 Thes 1:6–7).
- Jesus will be glorified, and so will His saints (2 Thes 1:10–12).

2 THESSALONIANS

- **Despair from false doctrine.**
- Paul reminds the church of his teachings regarding the return of Jesus, and the things that must happen beforehand—including the appearance of the "man of lawlessness" (2 Thes 2:3).
- So Paul explained to them that this future time of tribulation had not yet come because a certain "man of lawlessness" had not yet been revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:3).
- Comparisons with other passages in Daniel, Matthew, and Revelation reveal this man to be none other than the Antichrist.
- But Paul encouraged the Thessalonians not to worry, because the Antichrist would not come until the restrainer—the the Spirit of God working redemptively through the church, is removed.
- When the believers leave the earth in the rapture, all who remain will experience the wrath of the tribulation.

- **Busybodies in the church.**
- A few Thessalonians had fallen off into undisciplined lives: they weren't working, and they weren't holding to Paul's traditions.
- Some had become "busybodies," people getting involved in other's work without contributing themselves (2 Thes 3:11).
- Paul reminds them of the example he set: how he worked among them with his own hands (2 Thes 3:7–8).
- He also leaves instructions for dealing with those who would reject his teachings in this letter (2 Thes 3:14–15).

OVERVIEW OF 1 THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION (1Th 1:1-4)

Salutation (1Th 1:1)

Thanksgiving for their faith, hope, and love (1Th 1:2-4)

- PERSONAL REFLECTIONS (1Th 1:5-3:13)
  - REGARDING THEIR CONDITION (1Th 1:5-10)
  - REGARDING HIS CONDUCT (1Th 2:1-12)
  - REGARDING HIS CONCERN (1Th 2:13-3:13)

- **APOSTOLIC INSTRUCTIONS (1Th 4:1-5:28)**
  - WALK IN HOLINESS (1Th 4:1-8)
  - WALK IN LOVE (1Th 4:9-10)
  - WALK IN DILIGENCE (1Th 4:11-12)
  - WALK IN HOPE (1Th 4:13-18)
  - WALK IN LIGHT (1Th 5:1-11)
  - WALK IN OBEDIENCE (1Th 5:12-22)

CONCLUDING REMARKS (1Th 5:23-28)

OVERVIEW OF 2 THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION (2Th 1:1-2)

1. **Salutation (2Th 1:1)**
2. **Greetings (2Th 1:2)**

- **ENCOURAGEMENT IN PERSECUTIONS (2Th 1:3-12)**
  - THANKFUL FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL GROWTH (2Th 1:3-4)
  - ENCOURAGEMENT IN TRIALS IN VIEW OF THE LORD'S RETURN (2Th 1:5-10)
  - HIS PRAYER FOR THEM (2Th 1:11-12)

- **ENLIGHTENMENT ABOUT THE COMING OF THE LORD (2Th 2:1-17)**
  - DO NOT BE TROUBLED (2Th 2:1-2)
  - STEADFASTNESS ENCOURAGED (2Th 2:13-17)

- **EXHORTATIONS TO CHRISTIAN LIVING (2Th 3:1-15)**
  - A REQUEST FOR PRAYER, AND A PRAYER FOR THEM (2Th 3:1-5)
  - A CHARGE TO DISCIPLINE THE DISORDERLY (2Th 3:6-15)

CONCLUDING REMARKS (2Th 3:16-18)